Conflict - Resolution

Structured Small Group Program

The B.O.S.S. Team

Being Oppositional Safe & Secure…You’re the Boss of Your Response

**Goal/ Purpose:**

Six to eight high School freshman boys aged 15-16, will learn how to exhibit appropriate conflict resolution skills that lead to mature and progressive solutions in line with the school's mission statement and ASCA Personal/Social Development standards. The marked conflict-resolution skills will improve in-class behavior, reduction in detention rates and higher academic achievement.

West Orange NJ H.S. Mission Statement:

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| |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | Our Mission Statement |  |  | |
| West Orange High School, a vital part of a culturally and linguistically diverse community, challenges and encourages students to strive for excellence through rigorous and comprehensive programs, to become active members of their community, and to emerge as lifelong learners. To this end, we are committed to superior classroom instruction, a safe and nurturing environment, and a partnership with family and community.  The mission of the West Orange Public Schools is to engage in an energetic partnership with all components of this culturally-diverse community, to marshal resources to assist all students to reach their full potential through an academic emphasis on the New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards, to promote the highest quality intellectual and human relations development of our pupils, and to instill in all students the knowledge and decision-making skills essential to make appropriate choices and successfully meet the challenges they will encounter as productive members of society. |

**Population**

High School freshman boys that have received both in and out of school discipline for behavioral issues via detention and noted behavioral issues on progress report/report cards in the last four months. The age of the group will be 15-16 and the group will range from 6-8 students for 7 Monday sessions during study hall.

**Rationale/ Need**

Data Source(s): 1: Detention log-sheet. 2: Behavioral grade on progress report and report cards. Another source in identifying student needs would be the type of reasons the students are being disciplined for, i.e., fights, arguments, bullying, instigating fights (conflict issues). Grades have been reviewed in the classes that students are behaving most poorly in and teachers have been interviewed (via attached questionnaire) to confirm their assessment of the low social skill scores in relation to academic scores. A questionnaire was given to the teachers. The interviews and questionnaires confirm the correlation of poor behavior attributing to poor academic performance. This structured counseling group of West Orange high school freshman will focus on conflict-resolution. The group has been formed to work with the freshman boys that rank the highest on receiving detention over the last four months. Each freshman has received poor behavioral standards on their first two report cards and has also been on in-school social restriction. Each student has had a parent/guardian come in for parent teacher meetings and has been interviewed regarding granting permission to invite their child to join the group. While acknowledging past experiences, SFBT is, however, more interested in shifting the focus to the future. The supportive role of the Solution Focused Practitioner is about helping learners find answers for themselves as opposed to directing them as to what to do (Finlay, 2011). In this way, I allow each member to come up with ideas on how to improve their conflict-resolution skills and name feelings so that they can better addressed what emotion is being hotly effected when evoked into displeasing situations. In following the SFBT model in group therapy, my desire is to make every session independent in respect to gaining knowledge and insight that can be immediately applicable if for any reason they are unavailable to attend every or the next session.

**Theoretical Orientation**

The theoretical approach to helping 15-16 year old freshman high school boys is the implementation of solution-focused brief therapy. Using the SFBT approach I will implement questioning. Questions become the primary communication tool and main intervention. SF group leaders use questions as a way to better understand a group member’s experience (Corey, 2012). The “Miracle Question” is another technique used as a visualization exercise into what life will look like when the conflict is resolved. The time efficiency for SFBT is highlighted as a major plus for work in schools. The structure of SFBT is measureable and allows the student to come up with their own solution. Taking ownership of the cure is more encouraging then being told what to do. SFBT techniques are simple to implement and can be used by counselors who have different levels of experience to generate a satisfactory outcome for clients (Brasher, 2009).

**Ethical. Legal, and Multicultural Issues**

**Ethical, Legal:** The group leader and members of the group have reviewed the confidentiality in pre-screening and in our initial stage where I explained in detail how all of us, myself included has to respect each other values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds (A.1.C., ASCA). Confidentiality was reviewed as it pertains to everything said in the group has to stay in the group and if anyone has a personal problem with something said they are to personally speak with the group leader (A.2.A., ASCA).

**Multicultural Issues:** Due to the emphasis on the experience of clients rather than working from the counselor’s framework, the discussion of solutions rather than problems and the use of the client’s words rather than the counselors make SFBT an ideal counseling approach with diverse populations. SFBC works most effectively with individuals and cultures with preferences for engaging in direct behavior change rather than approaches that focus on feelings and cognitions (Corey, 2012).

**Recruitment and Screening**

The recruitment process will go as follows: Questionnaire to be distributed to teachers that have children from target group in their classes. One page, 11 question teacher questionnaire will be distributed on-line and hard-copy via email and mailbox, respectively (attached). Parent informed consent will be mailed home and emailed to the parent of children I target (attached). A phone call will follow any student’s home that does not reply to mailed copy or email within five school days. Students will be interviewed once informed consent is signed and returned. Student interview will consist of a conversation regarding the formation, process and objective of the group as well as confidentiality.

**Structure**

My solution-focused brief therapy group will be closed, consisting of high school freshman boys, ages 15-16. The group will meet 7 sessions in duration, once a week in the computer lab on Monday’s 6 period (study hall for 45 minutes). Pollev.com will be used in some question and answer time. The group will be run twice a year based on the success of this pilot group and will be broken up into boys and girls.

**Core ASCA Standard(s)**

PS: A1.5 Identify and express feelings. A:A3.2 Demonstrate the ability to work independently, as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other students. A:A2.3 Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed. Session #2: ASCA Standards: PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings. PS:A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Know how to apply conflict resolution skills. PS:B1.3 Identify alternative solutions to a problem. PS:A2.7 Know that communication involves speaking, listing and nonverbal behavior.

**Core State Academic Standard(s)**

Identify the core academic standards covered in program. These should be written in list form.

U.S. History:

All students will acquire the knowledge and skills to think analytically about how past and present interactions of people, cultures, and the environment shape the American heritage.

Such knowledge and skills enable students to make informed decisions that reflect fundamental rights and core democratic values as productive citizens in local, national, and global communities.

Writing Standards:

Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Introduce claim(s),

Use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence.

Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

**Objectives**

* The B.O.S.S. Team’s objectives are to learn how to respond to conflict/opposition in a manner that is mature and leads to positive communication habits. This objective will result in both verbal and non-verbal communication skills with classmates, school faculty, friends and family.
* Having met the team objectives, students will reduce the amount of in-school detention by 50% of fourth week of group involvement, 75% by fifth week and 100% by end of program; week 7.
* Teachers will notice pronounced progress based on the frequency of in-class conflict with peers pre-group versus the frequency of conflict/disruption post-group.
* Group members will perform 25% better in class participation and quality of class room behavior will noticeably improve.
* Student will no longer receive negative behavioral marks on report card and progress reports for 80% of their classes on report card and progress report.
* When in-class behavior is corrected, student will be 50% less likely to combatively defend himself.
* Student will apologize for behavior in school when addressed more than 70% of the time.
* When in-class behavior is corrected, students will more than 50% of the time, apologize and correct behavior.
* Given a mock argument, the students will be able to suggest the best course of action.
* Students will be able to articulate the best way to resolve a conflict and explain an understanding and respect for opposite reactions, providing two reasons why someone might feel the opposite of how they feel.
* On descriptive writing assignments in language arts, group members will show an improvement in descriptive writing ability and grades will improve by 25%.
* In U.S. History, student will be able to articulate alternate responses to the American Civil War.

**Program Evaluation**

The evaluation of the B.O.S.S. structured program group of high school freshman boys ages 15-16 will be using the date-driven detention rates, behavior scoring on report card and progress reports, observation by both counselor, vice principle and teachers. A post interview and survey will determine internal feelings of progress and individual objectives. Parents/Guardians will answer a brief survey on-line assessing their children’s progress (attached).

**Session 2**

**Title: Fill In The Blanks**

**Brief Summary of Session:** In the second session, I will reiterate the need for confidentiality; perform an ice-breaker in where each student will mention three things they last did to resolve a conflict with only one statements being true; in which case the student to the right guesses which statement is true and so on. Followed by, goal setting. Go around the room and ask, miracle question: “Consider the possibility that while you are sleeping tonight, the problem you presented today is solved during your sleep. When you awake, how will you know that a miracle has occurred and that your problem is solved?” This type of questioning encourages goal setting in that the answer to the question helps clients identify changes that they desire to occur. The answer also forces clients to focus on a positive future and moves the focus away from current and past problems to a future solution (Brasher, 2009).

Next, I proceed to distribute my first worksheet. The first worksheet is entitled “Fill In The Blanks” (hand-out attached). This exercise is intended to start a dialogue to increase the students’ vocabulary of feeling words. The procedure: Ask the group to suggest different emotions. Without explaining how their suggestions will be used, write a list of ten emotions on the chalkboard. Then, read the following story aloud, inserting emotions from the list, in sequence, in the blank spaces (Pill, 2005). While acknowledging past experiences, SFBT is, however, more interested in shifting the focus to the future. The supportive role of the Solution Focused Practitioner is about helping learners find answers for themselves as opposed to directing them as to what to do (Finlay, 2011). In this way, I allow each member to come up with ideas on how to improve their conflict-resolution skills and name feelings so that they can better addressed what emotion is being hotly effected when evoked into displeasing situations. In following the SFBT model in group therapy, my desire is to make every session independent in respect to gaining knowledge and insight that can be immediately applicable if for any reason they are unavailable to attend every or the next session.

**Theoretical Orientation:** Solution-Focused Brief Therapy

**Specific Group Technique:** Miracle Question

**Duration: 45** Minutes

**Materials/ Media:** Group activity worksheets, role play scripts, homework and journaling.

**Core ASCA Standard(s):** ASCA Standards: PS: A1.5 Identify and express feelings. A:A3.2 Demonstrate the ability to work independently, as well as the ability to work cooperatively with other students. A:A2.3 Use communications skills to know when and how to ask for help when needed.

**Core State Academic Standard(s):** Language Arts; Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Introduce claim(s), use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

**Objectives:** In this exercise the objective is to increase the students’ vocabulary of feeling words.

**Homework/ Ownwork**: Write your own “fill in the blank” story. In the first box, describe a recent experience in which you had a lot of feelings. Copy your description in the second box, leaving out all the feelings words. Read your story to a group member, who can fill in the blanks to make a new story.

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:** Confidentiality issues may arise considering this is the second group and members are just getting to know each other and feel comfortable sharing. We are encouraging group activity while I establish in-group cultural, repoire and expectations.

**Session 3**

**Title: The Sentence**

**Duration: 45** Minutes

**Brief Summary of Session:** Part of the group rules is having the football to speak. Speaking out of turn earns you 10 push-ups. Intro: Speak about last week’s B.O.S.S. motto: “I can’t control others but I’m the B.O.S.S. of how I respond” someone new volunteer to share (use team list to decide who needs to share). Using the workbook “Everyone Gets Angry” activity #40, The Sentence. Have everyone write down an “angry sentence.” Think of a situation where anger might be expressed and write down one sentence from an imagined conversation. The sentence must have actual content and sound “neutral” when written. In other words, it can’t be something like: You are just stupid and I hate you. It should be more like: You took my CD’s without asking and I couldn’t find them last night. Have each student read his or her sentence two ways. First read the sentence in an angry way. Next, read the sentence but eliminate the inflection, tone, and volume that made it sound so angry the first time. Talk about 1) What were the differences between the first reading and the second? 2) What caused the differences? 3) What changes were made? In closing: From the Big C.U.P. grab this week’s confession where a student anonymously submitted a story (read aloud). Session 4 motto: “Once I say it, I can’t take it back” (if time permits, ask what does that mean to you and why). Own-work: write a paragraph in your journal. Discuss what makes words sound angry. Do people respond differently when angry words are expressed in a non-angry way? Outtro: 1, 2, 3 I’m the B.O.S.S. shout.

**Theoretical Orientation:** Solution-focused brief therapy in groups.

**Specific Group Technique:** Questioning will is the counseling technique used in this third group session.

**Materials/ Media:** Hand-out question and journal exercise.

**Core ASCA Standard(s):** ASCA Standards: PS:A1.5 Identify and express feelings. PS:A1.6 Distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Know how to apply conflict resolution skills. PS:B1.3 Identify alternative solutions to a problem. PS:A2.7 Know that communication involves speaking, listing and nonverbal behavior

**Core State Academic Standard(s):** Language Arts; Write arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence.

Introduce claim(s), use words, phrases, and clauses to create cohesion and clarify the relationships among claim(s), counterclaims, reasons, and evidence. Provide a concluding statement or section that follows from and supports the argument presented.

**Objectives:** In this third session group members review how tone, volume, inflection affects the expression of conflict

**Assessments**: Create a criterion-referenced assessment for each objective. The planned assessments should accurately assess the behavior of outlined in the objectives and provide the conditions stated in the objectives. Additionally, best practices for distance education should be taken into consideration. Only one assessment item is required to assess each objective; however,

multiple assessments are also acceptable. Note that one assessment may assess multiple objectives. It is recommended that you create a pre-post test for the session that includes multiple choice items for each session objective, include at least one for the school counseling content and one for the core academic content. Include all ancillary materials in the appendix

**Homework/ Ownwork**: Write a paragraph in your journal (handout). Discuss what makes words sound angry. Do people respond differently when angry words are expressed in a non-angry way?

**Group Stage and Emerging Issues:** This is the working stage. Emerging issues consist as more group members disclose, individual empowerment as members see that implementing key words in the delivery of disagreeable views allows them to be heard and understood. Group members further take ownership for responses

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our district’s Comprehensive Guidance Program emphasizes the importance of academic and life success for every student. During the school year, students have the opportunity to participate in small groups. Small group counseling is an excellent way for students to learn skills, develop self-awareness and confidence, practice new behaviors, and better understand how to effectively deal with some of the issues/concerns life presents. We have found that when we work with students in groups, they gain support from others who are experiencing similar situations or who have adjusted well after experiencing a similar situation in the past. Your child has expressed an interest in participating in a group called Conflict Resolution which will begin on June 7, 2012. The group will focus on helping students identify and understand common thoughts and feelings associated with the experience of resolving conflict, developing positive coping strategies and learning from the shared experiences of other students in similar circumstances. This group will meet Wednesday’s for approximately five weeks for one hour each week. We will meet at different times during the school day to minimize the content missed in each class. Classroom requirements will take precedence over group participation. Please understand that participation in the group is completely voluntary and student confidentiality is addressed and respected. The exception to this is my legal and ethical responsibility to take appropriate action in the case of an individual intending to do harm to self or others; if abuse or neglect is suspected, if illegal activity is reported to me or if I am required to do so by a court of law. Please contact me at (973) 619-3266 if you have questions or desire further information about the group. In order for your child participate in this group, district policy requires your signed consent.

Please sign, date

Respectfully,

Cory A. Jones

Professional School Counselor

West Orange High School

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| **TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE** |
| 1. The specific off task behavior (s) student engages in, which are of particular concern and/or which interfere with their learning and/or the learning of others: |
| 2. These behaviors are most likely to occur at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(time), during \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(subjects)  and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(activities), in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(physical settings) and with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(people). |
| 3. These behaviors are least likely to occur at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (time), during \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(subjects) and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(activities), in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(physical settings) and with \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (people). |
| 4. By engaging in these challenging behaviors, student avoids: |
| 5. By engaging in these challenging behaviors student gains: |
| 6. What seems to trigger the student’s challenging behavior? |
| 7. The student doesn’t engage in more adaptive behavior, because they seem to be lacking the following academic, cognitive, social skills: |
| 8. The student doesn’t engage in more adaptive behaviors, even though they seem to have the necessary academic, cognitive, social skills to perform the desired behavior, because: |
| 9. Right after STUDENT engages in the challenging behavior, the (circle) (teacher ignores the behavior, teacher warns the student, teacher reprimands student, student is given time-out, student loses privileges such as\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, (circle) (student is sent to the office), (teacher communicates with student’s parents), (student is given an in-school suspension), (student is given an out-of-school suspension), (classmates get angry with student), (classmates laugh at student), (classmates give student attention), (classmates ignore student), other). |
| 10. In order to address student's challenging behavior (s), the teacher (school) has (list interventions): |
| 11. There have been some successes when: |

Post-Group Parent/Guardian Questionnaire

Q1. On a scale of 1 – 10, 10 being the highest, what level of improvement have you experienced with your child’s conflict resolution skills?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Notes:

Q2. What percentage of change have you been pleased with?

5% 10% 20% 40% 60% 80% 100%

Notes:

Q3. Did your child express pleasure in being a part of the group?

Yes, very much Yes, Somewhat Yes, moderate No, not at all

Notes:

Q4. Based on your child’s progress, would you recommend the group to another parent?

Yes No Maybe

Notes:

Q5. What type of group topic would you like created to address in your child’s life?

Notes: